



The 1982 Falklands War through the pages of BDXC Communication



The Falklands War was a ten-week undeclared war between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982 over two British dependent territories in the South Atlantic: the Falkland Islands and its territorial dependency, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

The conflict began on 2 April, when Argentina invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands, followed by the invasion of South Georgia the next day. On 5 April, the British government dispatched a naval task force to engage the Argentine Navy and Air Force before making an amphibious assault on the islands. The conflict lasted 74 days and ended with an Argentine surrender on 14 June, returning the islands to British control.

The conflict was a major episode in the protracted dispute over the territories' sovereignty. Argentina asserted (and maintains) that the islands are Argentine territory, and the Argentine government thus characterised its military action as the reclamation of its own territory. The British government regarded the action as an invasion of a territory that had been a Crown colony since 1841. Falkland Islanders, who have inhabited the islands since the early 19th century, are predominantly descendants of British settlers, and strongly favour British sovereignty. Neither state officially declared war, although both governments declared the Islands a war zone. (details from Wikipedia)

To mark 40 years since the Falklands conflict, this feature looks at the news and reports related to it that appeared in "Communication" between April and August 1982, which was the period during and just after the war. At the time, the magazine was thought to be the quickest for publishing information about Falklands-related broadcasts for DXers and shortwave listeners.

The editorial's mentioned below were written by our General Editor at the time, Chris Greenway, whilst DX News was edited by Alan Pennington (this also included the latest reports from BBC Monitoring) and Logbook was compiled by Tony Rogers.

Communication - Edition No 90 - April 1982

Editorial: As I write the likely course of events in the South Atlantic following the invasion of the Falkland Islands is still highly unclear. From a radio point of view the Falkland Islands Broadcasting Station have always represented one of the supreme DX challenges. The 1 kW transmitter on 2370 kHz was only on the air for six or seven hours a day; propagationally reception was only really possible from around midnight until sign-off an hour or two later. Reports from the Falklands indicate that the occupying forces have suspended the normal programme schedule, and it appears that during the 24 hours immediately after the invasion the FIBS was on the air almost continuously, broadcasting in both English and Spanish.

The BBC broadcasts a special programme, under the title 'Calling Falklands', every Sunday at 2210-2245 on 9915 and 12040 kHz. Normally this programme, which has been rebroadcast up to now by the FIBS, restricts itself to playing record requests for the islanders. However, BBC sources indicate that the programme will now be used for more serious purpose.

Radiodiffusion Argentina broadcasts 30-minute programmes in English on 11710 kHz at 1100, 1530, 1630, 1730, 1930, 2200 (all not Sundays), and at 0100 (not Mondays, also on 9690 kHz). On Sundays there is a 10-minute English news bulletin at 1800 on 11710 kHz. In addition, there is a 5-minute news bulletin in English daily except Sundays at 1330 on 11710 kHz. This bulletin is specifically aimed at the islands of the South Atlantic. The 2200-2230 broadcast is being well received at the moment.

Late news: The BBC World Service will be broadcasting extra programmes to the Falkland Islands on Tuesdays (and Thursdays?) from 2115 to 2200 on 15400 kHz. These broadcasts are from the Ascension Islands relay. Feeders from the UK are on 19455 and 15670 kHz (CG). An ITN newscast (4 April) said the occupying forces were confiscating shortwave radios (presumably ham equipment), although some hams were still operating.

Communication - Edition No 91 - May 1982

Editorial: 'Communication' was the first DX magazine to publish last month exclusive details of the BBC's expanded service to the Falkland Islands. These broadcasts have been increased again within the past few days; full details of this, and the many other items of news from the South Atlantic are in this month's DX News.

Mailbox: Geoff Crabb has been tuning in to Argentine Annie (or should it be Buenos Aires Betty, or Falklands Fanny, or Malvinas Maureen ...): "Listening on 17740 kHz a couple of times has reminded me of a common problem in shortwave international broadcasting - the poor standard of pronunciation by many announcers whose native tongue is not English. We have all stopped listening to a broadcast because either the accent was too thick, or the voice too soft and blurred. And what is acceptable in a strength 555 broadcast turns to sheer hard work in a 333 signal. Even Radio Prague the other day had an OM inclined to make one tune onwards. That is why Radio Moscow is easy to listen to. Its announcers speak English flawlessly. As for some Middle East and Asian stations! The young lady of Buenos Aires (who sounds Anglo-Argentine) has such a soft tone that although her accent is non-existent, over a long distance with a weak signal it is very hard to hear all she is saying. I wish other stations would take note." A very good point, Geoff, at least the announcers of RAE are easy to understand.

DX News: A station presumed to be broadcasting from Argentina and claiming to be from the "Malvinas" (Falkland Islands) has been heard in English with programmes intended for the British task force in the South Atlantic. The broadcasts were first heard on 21 April. Programmes are approximately 45 minutes in length and are broadcast at 1800, 2000, 2200 and 0000 on 25680 and 17740 kHz. The transmission at 2200 on 17740 kHz is heard well in the UK after VOA Greenville has closed at 2200 and over VOA Philippines also on 17740 kHz with a good signal apart from fading, although the woman announcer is sometimes difficult to read. The programmes give the Argentinian view on events in the South Atlantic with references to specific listeners - eg "Sandy", the task force commander - plus pop and light music - eg appropriately "Stormy Weather" and "Yellow Submarine". (Chris Greenway, Alan Pennington, Klaus Werner)

The identification by the station on 17740 and 25680 kHz by the woman announcer is "I am Liberty and talking to you from the heart of the Malvinas, Sandwich and South Georgian Islands" and "I am a voice, a spirit, a country, and who can proudly say today the world listens when Argentina speaks". (BBCM)

With the crisis in the South Atlantic surrounding the Falklands Islands, the BBC World Service has been broadcasting special programmes to the Falklands. Initially they were on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, but with effect from 26 April are daily on 15400 and 11820 kHz from Ascension at 2115-2200. As detailed exclusively in April's Communication, feeders from the UK are on 19455 and 15670 kHz (on both these feeders, the Falklands programme is on LSB and World Service on USB). (Chris Greenway)

The following additional broadcasts to the Falklands from BFBS via Ascension were introduced on 26 April - on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday only on 21490 and 17830 kHz at 1100-1130 with feeders from UK on 22930 kHz USB and 26490 kHz USB. The programme is "BFBS Calling the Task Force" with record requests played by Sarah Kennedy. (Chris Greenway)

BBC World Service has also transmitted extra Spanish as from 7 April (they now start at 2315, ex-0015). BBC Spanish to Latin America currently: From UK: 2315-0315 on 11680 kHz and at 0015-0415 on 6110 kHz. From Antigua: 2315-0415 on 9765 kHz. From Ascension Island: 2315-0215 on 11820 kHz and at 2315-0315 on 15390 kHz. From Delano USA: 0215-0415 on 6055 & 11820 kHz. (Chris Greenway)

Radiodiffusion Argentina's external foreign service has been broadcast on Sundays (local time) since 11 April. Sunday Spanish only transmissions for Argentinians abroad have been dropped. The foreign language service was only Monday to Saturday previously. (BBCM)

On 23 April, Telam, the Argentinian news agency, reported that three private stations had been authorised to use additional frequencies in order to broadcast their programmes to residents and armed forces personnel in Patagonia and the territory of the Malvinas Islands (ed: Falkland Islands). Stations would now broadcast: Radio del Plata 11710 kHz at 0300-1000, Radio Rivadavia 9690 kHz at 0000-1000 and Radio Continental 6060 kHz at 1100-1500. Frequencies would be used by RAE during the rest of the day. Monitoring has confirmed use of 9690 kHz by Radio Rivadavia and 11710 kHz by Radio Del Plata. Radio Rivadavia also audible on 2385 kHz in addition to 9690 & 603 kHz at 0300 on 25 April. (BBCM)

According to an Argentine news agency report, provision within the framework of the Argentine "Servicio Oficial de Radiodifusion" was being made for the stations LRA-60 on 536 and 2585 kHz and also for LRA-50 on 710 kHz. A report of 2 April said that as of 1020 local time, the former Port Stanley radio station was broadcasting as LRA Radio Nacional, Islas Malvinas - it began its programmes with the Argentine National Anthem. According to RAE, the station is continuing to broadcast in English. (BBCM)

Communication - Edition No 92 - June 1982

Editorial: For the third month running our bulletin's "hot news" sections are dominated by radio matters connected with events in the South Atlantic. In last month's issue we brought you details of 'Liberty' and broadcasts of the British Forces Broadcasting Service - both transmitting on shortwave and aimed directly at the Task Force. This was in addition to the expanded BBC services in Spanish to Latin America and the nightly 'Calling the Falklands' programme.

Additional frequencies have now been added to these two services in an attempt to overcome the effects of Argentine jamming. The jammers also have a new target - 'Radio Atlantico del Sur', the MoD propaganda station operating from Ascension Island.

DX News: RAE schedule: 11710 kHz: 2300 German, 2330 French, 0000 Portuguese, 0030 Spanish, 0100 English, 0130 German, 0200 Portuguese and 0230 Spanish. (SCDX/ Ron Cross)

As of 27 May, 11710 kHz is carrying external service programmes 24 hours - previously it had been relaying Radio del Plata from 0300. (Chris Greenway)

An Argentine News Agency reported on 15 May that LRA Radio Nacional on 9600 kHz (possibly an error for 9690) was subject to interference "apparently from a powerful transmitter located in the northern zone of the continent". They also reported that the BBC had "superimposed" its broadcasts for Latin America on top of RAE on 11710 kHz. In fact, BBC is using 11715 kHz at 2315-0315, but Moscow's English service to ECNA is occupying 11710 at 2300-0300. (BBCM)

Liberty, the pro-Argentinian station, continues on 17740 kHz with 45-minute programmes at 1800, 2000, 2200 and 0000. The signature tune is an orchestral version of "Yesterday". The second channel of 25680 kHz used initially is believed to have been replaced by 15110 kHz, but the latter frequency has not yet been confirmed. (BBCM)

Radio Atlantico del Sur is the identification used by a station operated by the Ministry of Defence and broadcasting in Spanish to Argentine forces in the Falklands area. The broadcasts started on 19 May and are carried by a requisitioned BBC transmitter on Ascension Island at 2300-0200 on 9710 kHz. 9710 is not a BBC frequency but it is close to the channel of 9690 kHz used by RAE and Radio Rivadavia, Buenos Aires. 9710 kHz itself is also listed as being used by Radio El Mundo, Buenos Aires.

The station also started broadcasts on 28 May on 9700 kHz at 0830-0930. Programmes consist of news and suitable popular light music. RAdS would not indulge in propaganda according to a MoD spokesman but this seems pretty wide of the mark. The news, as well as straight factual reporting contains a mixture of crude and occasionally comic attempts at demoralisation - its stock in trade is bad news from Argentina. (Chris Greenway, Telegraph via Klaus Werner, Observer via Alan Pennington); in 1956 the Foreign Office broadcast a similar service in Arabic from Cyprus during the Suez campaign.

BFBS Calling the Task Force is now carried daily at 1130-1200 on 15105 kHz from Ascension, with feeders from the UK of 22930 and 262490 kHz, both LSB. The 1100-1130 time slot, which BFBS had occupied earlier in May, now carries extra BBC Spanish for Latin America on 17780 and 21735 kHz from Ascension and 11850 and 15180 kHz from Greenville. (Chris Greenway)

BBC Spanish to Latin America at 2315 is now broadcast on the following additional frequencies: from the UK on 7140 11715 15345 and 17875 kHz; from Greenville on 17865 15260 15390 and 17845 kHz (other frequencies at this time as May DX News)

BBC Calling the Falklands now additionally on 9915 and 12040 kHz at 2115-2200 from the UK, parallel to the frequencies listed last month from the Ascension relay. These are the frequencies that used to be used to the Falklands. (Chris Greenway)

All broadcasts above now being jammed, and additionally BBC World Service on 11750 kHz is also jammed. A variety of jamming is used - rapid pulses and buzzing, but appears weak when heard from the UK.

Communication - Edition No 93 - July 1982

Editorial: Between 2 April, when Argentine forces invaded the Falklands, and 15 June, when these forces surrendered to British troops, the external broadcasting services of both Britain and Argentina reacted to the crisis by introducing several major changes to their output. Now that things have quietened down somewhat it may be appropriate to review some of these changes on the British side. The information in this feature is correct up to 25 June 1982.

London Calling the Falkland Islands: This BBC-produced programme was, before April 1982, broadcast from the UK on 9915 and 12040 kHz at 2210-2245 on Sundays only. The programme consisted of record requests and messages to islanders from friends and relatives in Britain. From 6 April the programme was retimed to 2115-2200, and broadcast from Ascension Island on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays on 11820 and 15400 kHz.

The programmes were broadcast nightly from 26 April, and on 26 May the two original UK frequencies were added to those from Ascension to counteract the effects of Argentine jamming. At the start of the crisis the broadcasts were, apart from news bulletins, largely taken up with personal messages to the islanders. Later on, more time was taken up with messages from people such as the Governor and interviews with various public figures connected to the crisis. The daily programmes are continuing at the moment; there is no indication as to when, if ever, they will revert to their once-a-week status.

BBC Spanish to Latin America: Prior to the Argentine invasion this service was broadcast at 0015-0415 from the UK (on two frequencies), Ascension (two freqs), Delano (two freqs), and Antigua (one freq). From 7 April an additional hour was added at 2315-0015 and then from 5 May the service was broadcast on four additional frequencies from the UK. From 7 May an extra morning service was provided at 1100-1130 using two frequencies from Ascension and two from Greenville. From the same date Greenville also broadcast the night programme on four frequencies. All these extra times and frequencies are still in operation.

BFBS Calling the UK Task Force: This service was inaugurated on 26 April, broadcasting on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from Ascension on 17830 and 21490 kHz. The programmes, transmitted at 1100-1130, were produced by the British Forces Broadcasting Service but broadcast over BBC facilities; they consisted of record requests and messages for servicemen. From 7 May the programmes were broadcast daily and retimed to 1130-1155 using 15105 kHz from Ascension; this frequency was changed to 15180 kHz on 11 June. From 18 June the service was retimed to 1400-1425, and broadcast on 17870 from Ascension.

Radio Atlantico del Sur: On 19 May the government announced that, in accordance with its powers under Article 19 of the BBC's Licence and Agreement, it was requisitioning the use of one of the BBC's 250 kW transmitters on Ascension Island in order to broadcast in Spanish to Argentine forces on the Falkland Islands. This service was inaugurated the same evening with a schedule of 2300-0200 on 9710 kHz. The programmes were produced by Ministry of Defence personnel at an unknown site in the UK. From 28 May an additional broadcast at 0830-0930 on 9700 kHz was added. The station closed on 16 June and the BBC's transmitter was immediately returned to normal service.

DX News: RAE external service on 11710 kHz from 21 June has English retimed from 2200-2230 to 2230-2300. The full schedule is: 2200-2230 in German, 2230-2300 in English, 2300-2330 in German, 2330-0000 in French, 0000-0030 in Portuguese, 0030-0100 in Spanish, 0100-0130 in English, 0130-0200 in German, 0200-0230 in Portuguese, 0230-0300 in English, 0300-0330 in Spanish, 0330-0400 in French, 0400-0430 in German, and 0430-0500 in English.

At 0500, the domestic service of Radio Nacional is relayed. An announcement at the beginning of June stated RAE was using 11710 15345 9690 6060 and 6180 kHz to avoid interference "by the BBC" on 11710 kHz. (BBCM)

Liberty, supporting Argentinian occupation of the Falklands is now on 17738 kHz (mid-June) sandwiched between VOA and RFE. (RNMN via Ron Cross). The station made what appeared to be its last broadcasts at 2000, 2200 and 2400 on 21 June, repeated at 2200 on 22 June. At 2400 on 22 June, after the usual "Yesterday" theme tune a broadcast in Spanish was heard - poor reception precluded detailed translation. (BBCM)

The Falklands Islands Broadcasting Station came back on the air on 17 June, three days after the surrender of Argentine forces. The station had been off the air for some time as the Argentinians thought the Task Force might use it as a navigational aid. Earlier they had closed down the shortwave transmitter to prevent BBC Monitors in Chile from listening in. When they invaded the station was renamed LRA60, Radio Nacional, Islas Malvinas. (Chris Greenway)

The Ministry of Defence station using the requisitioned transmitter of the BBC on Ascension Island, Radio Atlantico del Sur, closed down on 16 June and the transmitter returned to normal BBC use. (Chris Greenway)

BFBS Calling the Task Force was retimed on 18 June to 1400-1425 daily on 17870 kHz from Ascension Island. The feeders from the UK are still 22930 and 26490 kHz, both LSB, at 1130-1155. (Chris Greenway)

The extra BBC Spanish for Latin America and Calling the Falklands continue to be broadcast - details unchanged from last month. (Chris Greenway)

Argentine jamming of BBC broadcasts ceased on 16 June. (Chris Greenway)

Communication - Edition No 94 - August 1982

DX News: Cable and Wireless, Port Stanley, is back on the air and heard opening daily with a test announcement around 1145 UTC on 24145 kHz USB. Telephone traffic starts around 1200, continuing past 2000. Also heard on 19950 kHz USB. (Dave Kenny)

BFBS Call the Task Force made its last broadcast on 16 July, almost 12 weeks after it first came on the air. (Chris Greenway)

London Calling the Falkland Islands is now broadcast on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays only, a change from the daily schedule. The time remains 2115-2200 with frequencies still 9915 and 12040 kHz (UK) and 11820 and 15400 kHz (Ascension)

BBC Spanish to Latin America has dropped some of the frequencies which were added during the Falklands crisis. The evening programme is no longer relayed by Greenville. (Chris Greenway)

RAE's English service 2230-2300 on 11710 kHz is no longer heard on Sundays. Assume it has returned to its pre-Falklands crisis pattern with no foreign broadcasts on Sundays (Argentine time). A relay of domestic service programmes is broadcast instead. RAE is using 6060 6180 9690 11710 and 15345 kHz for its external service.

RAE's English service announced on 8 July that from that date it would be broadcasting a 10-minute programme for DXers every Thursday in its Spanish, English, French, German, Portuguese, Japanese and Italian services. (BBCM)



"The 1982 Falklands War through the pages of Communication" was compiled by Tony Rogers

1982 South Atlantic Logbook

kHz	UTC	Station, details etc	SIO	Date	Init
2370	2320	Falklands Islands BS, Port Stanley. Very poor signal but would have given fair copy had it not been for strong thunder static. Programme included letter from the Managing Director of BBC's External Sces	222	15/06	CG
2370	2215	Falklands Islands BS, Port Stanley (tent). OM in EE; severe QRM	322	26/06	AP
6060	0440	R Nacional, Argentina. LA music and YL talking in Spanish	433	02/05	DR
9690	0540	RAE, Argentina. LA music, Spanish	433	03/05	DR
9690	2230	RAE, Argentina. ID, Falklands nx in Italian	422	14/06	AHP
9710	2255	R Atlantico del Sur. MoD operated propaganda station using a BBC transmitter on Ascension Island heard starting its first broadcast with IS and ID's to start of px at 2300. Good signal; with very slight QRM from Moscow	444	19/05	CG
11710	2207	RAE, Argentina. English news mixed with hymn	433	16/04	KPW
11710	2212	RAE, Argentina. EE news and anthem	322	01/05	KPW
11710	0745	R del Plata, Argentina. LA music, news in SS, off at 0830	333	08/05	DR
11710	0720	R del Plata, Argentina. Spanish MOR songs, ID as Radio Noticias	433	14/05	SG
11710	2200	RAE, Argentina. EE news & their version of reports from Falklands	433	22/05	JDS
11710	2225	RAE, Argentina. Talk on Falklands in EE, ID at 2230	343	20/06	JC
15345	2235	RAE, Argentina. Falklands communiqués in Italian (new freq)	222	14/06	AHP
15400	2119	BBC via Ascension Island. EE news and messages to the Falklands	333	08/04	KPW
15400	2133	BBC via Ascension Island. "Calling the Falklands"	333	01/05	KPW
15400	2130	BBC via Ascension Island. Music requests px for Falklands, EE	433	10/05	DR
15400	2120	BBC via Ascension Island. Sign-on, "Falkland Special" in EE	444	14/05	JC
17655	1020	Liberty, Argentina. Change of freq but still QRM from VOA		10/06	JC
17740	0000	Liberty from Argentina. Smooth talking YL with pro-Argentine comments in EE and messages to British Task Force, mixed with soft pops. Good strong signal similar strength to 11710; some QRM from VOA in EE. First heard 23/04 and regularly since	433	reg/04	CG
17740	0200	Liberty. Propaganda broadcasts from Argentina for troops in British Task Force. YL called "Liberty" trying to demoralise troops, twisted info in-between pop mx (mostly Beatles). Very languid and morose voice, asking troops to record px to play back later for themselves or friends. "The world listens when Argentina speaks". Signed-off at 2240 with "Yesterday"	vari	reg/04	DS
17740	2202	Liberty. Argentine propaganda station, EE YL talking and music	242	24/04	KPW
17740	2200	Liberty. Sign-on with "Yesterday" etc. Could only read in SSB; EE	343	02/05	JC
17740	2213	Liberty. YL talk & mx; much stronger today	333	02/05	KPW
17740	2000	Liberty. English; co-channel VOA Arabic	322	03/05	ES
17740	0001	Liberty. Propaganda & mis-info for the Task Force	343	09/05	JC
17740	2210	Liberty. Propaganda px by YL for British Task Force, EE	222	12/05	DR
21490	1100	BFBS Calling the Task Force via Ascension. Request px for forces	344	28/04	CG
22930	1130	BFBS. Regular "BFBS Calling the United Kingdom Task Force" with requests and dedications. Fair/poor but infinitely better than 15105 kHz Ascension Island channel where just a mess			GD
22930	1130	BFBS Calling the United Kingdom Task Force. Nicole Roman or Sarah Kennedy with requests and messages for the forces, off at 1155. Seems to be daily now. Clear but weak // 26490 barely detectable on clear channel; both LSB. No AM freqs heard	242	19/05	DK
22930	1130	BFBS Calling the Task Force. Nicole Roman px (LSB)	232	14/06	JC
22930	1130	BBC WS. EE (USB)	232	14/06	JC
24145	1150	Cable & Wireless, Port Stanley. Test transmission anns, into phone traffic at 1156	444	21/06	DK

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